

the chronicle

Families step out to help boost funds for hospital
- see page 12



Seven pages of entertainment and television
- start at page 23



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Plans for 50ft mobile phone mast lead to 200 complaints

MORE than 200 complaints have been made by residents against plans for a 50ft mobile phone mast in Halesowen.

The public consultation deadline was extended by seven days due to a surge of responses in the last two weeks.

Vodafone applied to replace a 30ft mast next to Huntingtree Primary and Huntingtree Park. Locals say the mast is a blot on the landscape

and that a new one would be "an even bigger eyesore". More than 100 people signed a petition against original plans but the planning inspectorate approved them.

This time residents bombarded Dudley Council with letters and emails calling for the proposals to be rejected. They are concerned about potential health risks to pupils at the school and families visiting the park.

The public consultation into the

plans ended on Friday and the application will now go before the council's planning committee.

Local resident Gareth Regan, aged 45, said: "Last time this huge mast was built even though none of the local people wanted it.

Installed

"Now they are looking to make it even bigger and we are determined that won't happen."

Outdoor gym equipment, a multi-

use games area and a community building were installed at the park as part of Dudley Council's £4.5m battle against childhood obesity. It also has two healthy town park rangers, paid up to £19,000 a year each.

Gavin Dring, of Bournes Hill, said: "Am I the only person who sees the irony of spending thousands of pounds building a community health hub, then installing a 15-metre high super powerful 3G

mobile phone mast directly in front of it?"

"It's going to be in front of a recreational area for children and a primary school."

A spokesman for Vodafone said: "Base stations are low powered devices which only cover approximately half a mile in radius and therefore we have to put base stations close to our customers."

"We need to improve the 3G coverage to our customers in Hasbury."

Council deputy steps up

DUDLEY Council has a new leader after the deputy stepped up following an election day shock.

Councillor Les Jones was elected unopposed to head the borough's ruling Tories after Anne Millward lost her seat in Gornal by just two votes at Thursday's elections.

He will remain acting leader until formally taking the role at a meeting on Thursday next week.

He has represented Wednesbury and Stourbridge East for the past 12 years and had been deputy leader for the past two years.

The announcement was made on Monday following a private meeting of Dudley's Conservative group.

Former Councillor Tim Wright will become deputy leader after winning a contest between six candidates.

Black Country-born Councillor Jones stood as Tory candidate for Halesowen and Rowley Regis in the 2001 and 2005 General Elections.

He set up home in Halesowen in 1983 and started his own computer systems supply business. He is married to fellow councillor Karen Shakespeare and lives in Stourbridge.

■ Election results - Page 5

Drivers face delay

MOTORISTS are being advised to avoid using the Grange Road island, near Halesowen, while repairs are carried out following a burst water main. The highway along the A456 and A459 around the island was left damaged. Repairs are underway and will last three weeks.

YELTZ IN SAFE HANDS - BOSS

By Tim Spiers

tim.spiers@expressandstar.co.uk

THE NEW owner of Halesowen Town has promised supporters that the club is in safe hands.

Businessman Steve Lynch completed his takeover of the beleaguered club on Saturday, bringing to an end the controversial reign of Graham Ingram and his brother Godfrey.

A few weeks ago The Yeltz had

looked in danger of going out of business, with former chairman Graham Ingram posting an appeal for new backers on the club's website.

After two months of negotiations, Mr Lynch has begun an era at The Grove in a deal the supporters group The Yeltz Trust fully endorses.

He compared the club's recent tur-

bulent history to an episode of EastEnders, but pledged that with him in charge those days were gone.

"I live in the real world," he said. "I'm not going to make promises about flying up the leagues or playing Manchester United. There's no overnight fix - there's too much neglect here."

"It needs to be built from the bottom up with structured running, but I can say that they're in safe hands."

He also owns Great Wyrley Football

Club, which does not have a team as it had folded before his arrival, and a social club in Birmingham.

The new owner said Shaun Cunningham would stay as manager and he and the supporters had similar expectations and ambitions.

Mr Lynch, originally from Birmingham but now living in Great Wyrley, added: "I fancied a new challenge and this certainly is one. The short-term plan is all about stability and rebuilding bridges with the fans."

When asked if he would be taking a hands-on role, he said: "Well I was at the club weeding for half the day yesterday so that gives you an idea."

Trust chairman Gary Willets met him and Mr Cunningham on Tuesday to discuss the takeover and the club's future. He gave his unanimous backing to the new owner.

"We have agreed that Mr Lynch should receive the full support of the Yeltz Trust," Mr Willets said.

Encourage

"It was pleasing that Shaun Cunningham attended the meeting and clearly plays a pivotal role in the plans for next season."

"We would now encourage the club's supporters and wider community to unite in the efforts to return Halesowen Town Football Club to its former position as a hub of the community and an asset which the town can be proud of."

In a statement on the club's website Graham Ingram said: "We wish the new owner well and appeal to the community of Halesowen to get involved and get behind him."

Halesowen finished bottom of the Zamarotto League Premier Division and will compete in either Division One Central or Division One South & West next season.



Cal and Paul Ingram, from Halesowen, and other dancers enjoying the party

VE anniversary tea dance party

DRESSED in war uniforms, smart dresses and various other costumes and clearly plays a pivotal role in the plans for next season.

"We would now encourage the club's supporters and wider community to unite in the efforts to return Halesowen Town Football Club to its former position as a hub of the community and an asset which the town can be proud of."

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dress as a young evacuee complete with gas mask-style box and a name tag, and his wife Cal.

"We enjoy dancing and you don't get many chances to practise traditional dances," said Mr Ingram, aged 55, of Hillbrow Crescent, Halesowen.

"My costume is something we threw together using old clothes I don't wear any more."

Residents of Belvidere Residential Home Stourbridge Road, Dudley, also turned out.

Professional help for dance students' project



Jodie Roberts, left, with back row, from left, Lucy Slimm, Candice Haines, Chloe Jones and Sheona Singh and front Rebecca Aston, Pippa Lacey and Zoe Langford

DANCE students at Halesowen College have been working with a professional artist to perfect their moves for a powerful final performance.

Jodie Roberts, aged 28, from Dudley Performing Arts, has been guiding the second year national diploma class on their contemporary project, entitled Power.

It explores the different notions of what power may bring to people and how society lives with its consequences.

Course leader Gemma Sherratt said: "Having a professional dancer in lessons really inspires the students.

"It gives them the opportunity to learn new techniques and develop their creativity.

"As they explore a different style of contemporary

movement Jodie gives them a wider skills base and another perspective for their choreography."

Students will perform their final piece on Wednesday May 25 and Thursday May 26, at 7pm, in the college theatre at Whittington Road. Tickets can be purchased on the door for £3 or £2 concessions.

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**Obesity's
£84m bill**

THE cost of treating overweight and obese patients in Dudley last year was £84 million, new figures reveal.

Health chiefs are now trying to drive down the cost by encouraging people to become more healthy.

Figures show there are 40,000 obese adults and 900 obese children in the borough.

The annual bill, which has risen by £1 million from last year, covers the cost of specialist treatment, bariatric surgery and staff training in prevention and management of obesity.

A NURSING home has been warned that it must improve record handling to ensure residents get enough food and drink, the right drugs and general care.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) says it has "moderate concerns" about care and welfare at the 30-bed Foresters Nursing Home, Walton Pool, Cleint, near Stourbridge, whether nutritional needs are always met and the management of medicines.

The CQC - which monitors homes - gave the Foresters, run by Redwood Care

Homes, Ltd, a month to say how it would improve. The home's deputy manager said an action plan had already gone to the CQC and much had been done to ensure care plans were kept up to date and followed through.

The CQC stepped in after concerns were raised by some relatives about whether residents always had enough to eat and drink.

A report says people living there and relatives told inspectors staff were "kind" and there was a "caring approach" to residents.

"We found that information about the care people need was not always up to date or correctly written down for staff to refer to," says the report. "This could cause confusion and put people at risk due to staff not being clear about the correct care to give."

"We saw that some important information about people who need a lot of help to eat and drink was not always filled in regularly or with enough detail."

"This puts people at risk because staff cannot keep a proper check on this aspect of their health."

Inconsistent

The report adds that ineffective stock control and ordering systems meant over-stocking with medication and records of what drugs had been ordered and administered not well enough organised.

"People may not always receive the correct care because some care records contain inconsistent information," says the report.

Fiona Milne, deputy manager at the Foresters, said: "The inspectors could see that our residents are well looked after - and now we have the systems to make sure that is always the case."

Hills alive with sound of music

THE Cleent Hills Singers will be joining other voices from the West Midlands to sing Mendelssohn's Elijah in Birmingham Town Hall on June 26. Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, professional soloists and a massed choir of 150 voices will be conducted by Michael Lloyd.

The event is organised by Making Music and takes place 165 years after the first performance of Elijah - also in Birmingham Town Hall - which was conducted by Mendelssohn himself. Rehearsals take place this month.

Families in deals to rescue homes

MORE than 20 Dudley families who were faced with the prospect of having their property repossessed have been given help to ensure they could stay in their homes.

Officials have stepped in to help households through the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme, which was first introduced in January 2009 as a safety net for owners facing repossession. New figures from

Dudley Council show there have been a total of 23 rescues completed up until the end of March this year.

Under the scheme instead of owning their home via a mortgage, residents are converted to affordable rent schemes in conjunction with local housing associations.

New criteria has also been brought in for the scheme and the highest priority will now be given to households whose need would be difficult to meet.

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GREEN-fingered pupils have been busy making the garden grow at Halesowen C of E Primary School.

They have been planting shrubs and plants in the school's courtyard garden as well as creating a vegetable patch as part of a science week at the school in High Street.

The vegetable patch will also link to a topic being studied by children in years three to five around children's experiences during the Second World War and the need for self sufficiency during the war years.

B&Q in Halesowen have donated bags of compost and plastic plant pots to the school while Asda has donated a range of vegetable seeds and seed trays. Key stage two co-ordinator Tom Garner said: "Events like this are an important part of developing our creative curriculum."

Hospice flagship shop to expand

A NEW venture is being launched by a Stourbridge-based charity in order to plug vital gaps in funding during the financial downturn.

Mary Stevens Hospice needs around £2 million a year to fund care for patients suffering long-term and life-limiting illnesses.

A new book store will be based in its flagship shop, based in the former Mark and Moody stationery store on the town's high street.

It is the second stage of a long-term plan to bring in crucial cash to help it through the uncertainty brought by the proposed changes to the NHS which provides some of its funding.

Renovations

The book store has been funded thanks to a £10,000 donation by long-term supporter and Brierley Hill businessman Mike Brown.

It is based in the empty first floor of the store and is nearly finished after new shelving, flooring and other building work and renovations were completed.

Bosses hope to recreate the experience of stores including WH Smith and Waterstone's and it will also be filling the gap soon-to-be left in the town when specialist book retailer Books Unlimited closed its Lower High Street store.

A wealth of book donations has already filled stockrooms at the hospice store. But bosses are making an appeal for more.

Youngsters digging for victory

Parent Gemma Stewart with Ellie Stewart-Gibbs, aged seven, and three-year-old Matthew Gibbs

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Jobs joy as firm seals Merc deal

Pickers tackle grot spots



Stourbridge resident Russell Eden cleans Heath Street as part of a new campaign

A CAMPAIGN urging people to "adopt a spot" to rid streets of litter has launched.

More than 10 people have agreed to keep sections of streets where they live in Stourbridge clean and clear.

Anti-litter action group Tidy Stourbridge was created after pictures of grubby, rubbish-filled streets appeared on social networking site Twitter.

Group co-founder Russell Eden, of Heath Street, Stourbridge, tackled a 50 metre stretch of road outside his home. He said: "We had a lot of people tell us that

they would like to come to our events but that they couldn't make it, or would be more inclined to do it if it was around where they live.

"I've cleared an area of my street and it looks fantastic—the contrast with where no work has been done is really striking."

He said they started to work closely with Dudley Council, which provided volunteers with litter-picking equipment. Tidy Stourbridge has held at least one litter-picking event a month since July, often alongside a social pint in a nearby pub afterwards.

ARTISTS are invited to help create a mural of the Titanic as part of the run-up to an annual arts showcase event in Dudley.

The mural is being created at Art-space, in Brierley Hill. Those wishing to contribute should call Anna Fusco on 01384 816587.

Mural in the making

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Zip wire is set to open for summer

A £250,000 high-rope adventure park opens in the Black Country this summer after plans were approved.

The new attraction in Sandwell Valley will feature an assault course with swings, climbing nets and a suspension bridge.

A 164ft zip wire and children's roundabout will also be included in the scheme, expected to open in July.

Plans have been unanimously approved by Sandwell planning committee.

It will be the borough's largest outdoor adventure playground aimed at youngsters aged between five and 13 and will be funded by the Play Pathfinder Capital Programme, money from the Government to improve play facilities for children nationwide.

Proud

Addressing the committee, council officer John Satchwell, said: "We are all very proud of our facilities at Sandwell Valley which is a major visitor attraction for local residents and other areas.

"We think these facilities will further enhance the facilities at Sandwell Valley."

The zip wire mirrors the successful Go Ape tree adventure attraction on Cannock Chase and high-rope adventure courses are also popular at Baggeridge Country Park near Sedgley.

Reassuring

ETMA is currently tooling up for production and will be looking to recruit staff when work on the contract starts towards the end of next year.

GSA Group's business manager Rajesh Bedi said: "This is great news for both ETMA Engineering and the Government to improve play facilities for children nationwide.

"In these uncertain times this comes as reassuring news that there are manufacturing opportunities opening up; it's about looking both locally as well as beyond to find them."

"As a company we kept our heads down and our efforts and standards high when times were low, and that is exactly what led to us converting this latest milestone contract."

Mural in the making

ARTISTS are invited to help

create a mural of the Titanic as part of the run-up to an annual arts showcase event in Dudley.

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Leaders finalise mosque proposal

MUSLIM leaders in Dudley are working with council officers to finalise controversial proposals for a new mosque before the deadline to lodge a detailed planning application expires in July.

Dudley Muslim Association has until July 17 to submit its designs for the mosque, which would be built in Hall Street, after a High Court ruling.

Chairman Kurshid Ahmed said work on the mosque plans was "progressing" well. He said the association was seeking advice from the authority.

"We are working with the council and will be submitting the plans. At the moment, I can't say when this will be because I don't know how long it will take," he said.

Ruled

It was recently revealed that plans for the mosque, which is expected to cost up to £12 million, would be scaled down but the association is remaining tight-lipped on the details.

Outline plans for the mosque and community training and enterprise centre were rejected by Dudley Council but overturned by the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol in 2008.

A High Court judge overturned an appeal against the decision by the council but ruled the association must submit a full planning application by July 2011, which is when outline planning permission for the scheme expires.

But the council is now preparing a High Court case in a bid to buy back the land earmarked for the mosque, citing a clause in the land contract as a reason.

The clause meant the mosque had to be substantially completed by the end of 2008. The council's legal papers have been lodged but no hearing date has yet been fixed.

Charity boost by store



Sainsbury's store staff celebrate raising more than £2,500

BAG PACKS, raffles and a balloon release were just some of the ways supermarket staff helped to raise more than £2,500 for their chosen charity.

Workers at Sainsbury's in Amblecote have spent 12 months generating cash for the Black Country Talking Newspaper and Magazine.

Fundraising events have been held throughout the year including dress down days, a flower wrapping service and a football sweepstake.

Digest

A total of £2,547 has now been handed over to the charity, which produces weekly CDs consisting of a digest of news and sport taken from local newspapers together with other items of interest for people with sight loss.

Charity co-ordinator Bronwen Hall said: "We're really grateful for the fantastic efforts of the colleagues and customers at Sainsbury's Amblecote.

"They have really helped to raise the profile of our charity in Stourbridge."

Store manager Vernon Dix said: "We would like to thank all our customers and colleagues."

Pupils get stuck in at grot spot

PUPILS from a Brierley Hill school got stuck into some litter picking to clean up a local 'grot spot'.

More than 20 children from Hawbush Primary stayed on after lessons to give their make-over to an alleyway next to the school, between Hawbush Road and Moor Street on May 3. The pupils are also members of the Hawbush Project, helping the local community.

The session was organised by Groundwork, the environmental charity, as part of the European Year of Volunteering.

Amit Dattani, leader for Groundwork in the Black Country, said: "The alleyway next to Hawbush Primary had become a local grot spot."

Show to be in spotlight

AN ILLUSTRATED talk on one of the country's most celebrated 19th century exhibitions will be held in Stourbridge.

Lecturer Charles Hajdamach will be the guest of Stourbridge Historical Society for the event on May 19. The talk will explore the history of The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851.

Mr Hajdamach is an expert on the glass industry and is former director of Broadfield House Glass Museum, in Kingswinford.

The meeting is at the Amblecote Room of Stourbridge Town Hall, in the Crown Centre at 7.30pm.

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Shock as Tories' leader loses by just two votes

THE TORY leader of Dudley Council was dramatically ousted in the election, losing her seat by just two votes.

Anne Millward, the first woman to lead the council, lost in the Gornal ward to Labour candidate Stuart Turner after two nerve-wracking recounts.

But overall the Tories lost just one seat, giving them 43 of the 72 and retaining their sizeable majority. Labour gained two, giving them 28.

Elsewhere the Labour party now controls Wolverhampton City Council with 35 councillors out of a total of 60.

In South Staffordshire, the Conservatives maintained their stronghold.

Argument

Labour gained eight seats in Walsall – leaving the party just two behind the Tories – and strengthened its grip on Sandwell Council.

But if there was an argument that every vote counts, it was underlined by last Thursday's ballot as Mrs Millward was edged out of her seat by the smallest margin in the borough's history.

After two recounts, she was ousted from her seat in Gornal with 1,618 votes – just two shy of victorious Labour candidate Stuart Turner.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my nine years as a councillor representing Gornal, and am extremely proud to be the first female leader of the council," she said afterwards.

Democracy

"I have made history again today as we have never had an election that was so close.

"I am disappointed, of course, but that's democracy. I plan to take some time out and catch up on all the things I couldn't do while working 50 hours a week as a local councillor and leader."

Mr Turner was "delighted and surprised" by his win.

Mrs Millward's deputy at the time of the election, Councillor Les Jones, said that her departure would be a "great loss" to the ward.



Contrasting emotions for the defeated Anne Millward and victorious Stuart Turner

South Staffs results

SOUTH Staffs

results

SOUTH Staffs results included the Kinver and Himley & Swindon seats.

Kinver

Brian Edwards* (Con)	1,659
Lin McElroy (Lab)	1,585
Paul Woodhouse (Con)	1,332
Ena Ray* (Independent)	1,071
Christine Ridgeway (Lab)	641
Con gain two seats.	53

Himley & Swindon

Keith Palmer (Con)	417
Gordon Fanthorpe (UKIP)	261
Keith Pincher (Ind)	152

Con hold. Majority 156

Police probe after leaflets complaint

POLICE are investigating a complaint that Wyre Forest Labour party leaflets deliberately tried to mislead the electorate.

The Wyre Forest Liberal Party has claimed leaflets "constantly" referred to Tory-Liberal cuts in an attempt to link the Liberal Party with the Liberal Democrats in the public's mind.

But a Labour Party representative said the leaflets were "not intentionally misleading" and said the term Tory-Liberal had been used by national media.

Leaflets were issued for both the Offmore & Comberton and Greenhill wards where Labour and Liberal candidates were standing for election to Wyre Forest District Council.

West Mercia Police confirmed it was looking into the allegations.

Dudley results

Ambleside

Pat Martin* (Con)	1681
John Martin (Lab)	1364
Pete Lee (UKIP)	446
Vera Johnson (Lib Dem)	227
Con hold. Majority 317	

Belle Vale

Bob James* (Con)	1931
Donella Russell (Lab)	1688
Dennis Neville (Green)	403
Con hold. Majority 243	

Brierley Hill

Rachel Harris* (Lab)	1503
Dan Horrocks (Con)	742
Annamarie May (UKIP)	273
Simon Foxall (BNP)	185
Linda Beasley (Lib Dem)	160
Gordon Elcock (Green)	131
Lab hold. Majority 761	

Brockmoor & Pensnett

Karen Jordan* (Lab)	1474
Sue Ridley (Con)	708
Andy May (UKIP)	312
David Lavender (Lib Dem)	108
Vicky Duckworth (Green)	80
Lab hold. Majority 766	

Castle & Priory

Ken Finch* (Lab)	2099
Hasan Afzal (Con)	731
Sue Rowe (UKIP)	661
Lab hold. Majority 1368	

Coseley East

Mervyn Mottram* (Lab)	1705
Martin Duffield (Con)	1500
Peter Hillman (UKIP)	592
Lab hold. Majority 751	

Cradley & Wollescote

Richard Body* (Lab)	2106
Louis Redding (Con)	865
Glen Wilson (UKIP)	289
Robert Weale (BNP)	179
John Payne (Green)	109
Margaret Hanson (Lib Dem)	106
Lab hold. Majority 1241	

Kingswinford N & Wall Heath

Cheryl Billingham (Con)	1895
David Tyler* (Lib Dem)	1599
Christine Perks (Lab)	814
Dave Timmins (UKIP)	272
Liz Jedenorg (Green)	93
Con gain. Majority 296	

Kingswinford S

Peter Miller* (Con)	2303
Stephen Haycock (Lab)	1238
Janet Wimlett (UKIP)	446
Lois Bramall (Lib Dem)	304
Con hold. Majority 1065	

Lye & Stourbridge

Mohammed Hanif* (Lab)	1747
Sharon Tinsley (Con)	1250
Susan Lucas (Lib Dem)	317
Abdul Qadus (Ind)	205
Lab hold. Majority 497	

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£575 PCM



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CRADLEY HEATH, PEAR TREE LANE

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Pledge to carry on with purge

COUNCIL bosses will continue seizing horses from the streets of Sandwell.

It follows seizures of two animals recently from the Weddell Wynd patch of land, Tipton Green.

The council, trying to stop stray horses wandering streets and wrecking gardens, say more horses seen wandering will be taken.

Councillor Ian Jones, Sandwell's cabinet member for jobs and economy, said: "We have instructed the bailiffs to continue their endeavours and it would seem that the roaming horses

have disappeared. We would like any residents to notify us if they are still in the area.

"We have started on this process and we will be making sure we clean up the Tipton area but we want to speak to the responsible horse owners to try and get some resolutions to the problem which has been with us for 50 or 60 years."

It is expected to cost up to £1,000 to remove each horse.

Owners have to pay medical, stabling and feeding costs to get them back.

Ancient law could help get horses off streets

Brahms is taking the spotlight



Musical director Tim Calloway seen leading Brierley Hill Choral Society

A CHOIR based in Dudley which has serenaded audiences for more than seven decades is dedicating its latest show to the works of a famous German composer.

Members of Brierley Hill Choral Society are busy rehearsing for their next show called Basically Brahms which will be staged next month at St Michael's Church, off Church Hill, in Brierley Hill, on May 7.

Compositions from conductor Tim Cal-

loway will also feature during the night. Society chairman Bob Lloyd-Jones says choir members are looking forward to the show.

Prices range from £7.50 to £8.50 with £5 student and £18 family tickets available which include refreshments.

Call 01384 392443 with further details available by logging on to www.brierley-hill-choral-society.org.uk

STRAY horses plaguing the Black Country will be impounded under an old law as part of a new plan unveiled by police and council leaders.

It came after Dudley Council officers agreed seizure of horses fell under section 24 of the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847, allowing cattle on a highway to be seized and impounded.

The council will pay police an undisclosed sum so horses straying onto roads can be seized and found permanent homes if owners do not appear in three days, in a six-month trial starts.

Hundreds of reports of animals causing havoc wandering across main roads flooded in since the start of the year, especially in Pensnett, Brockmoor, Kingswinford and Coseley areas.

Chief Inspector Mark Bramwell today said: "It means that we can actually take positive action and possibly move the horses for good, should they cause a problem. We get high volumes of calls each week and in many cases we have been powerless to act. The issue has always been identifying owners for these animals, however the new arrangement will give the owner the option to come forward and deal with the issue."

When an animal is impounded and moved to a paddock outside the Black Country, the owner has three days to prove ownership, proof and settle fines. Bosses have declined to say how much it will cost.

Council director of urban environment, John Millar, said they had a reactive service to help deal with stray horses after months of behind the scenes work with a number of agencies. "We will continue to work with our partners to tackle the problem of horses abandoned by irresponsible owners across the borough."



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Lytton Avenue, Halesowen
£500

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Drunk driver could not remember visit to pub

Dancing robot delights crowds

AN 8ft robot stomped into the Black Country to surprise and delight shoppers with some slick moves.

Titan the Robot danced and interacted with youngsters during three, free 30-minute shows at the Merry Hill Centre, Brierley Hill.

He was also there to promote the Black Country University Technical College, which is due to open in Walsall in September offering Year 10 and sixth formers the chance to gain qualifications for a career in science and engineering.

About 200 people gathered round the stage in Fountain Square to see each performance. Edna-May Johnson, aged 77, of Witton Street, Stourbridge, danced with Titan and sang along to routines. She said: "He's very entertaining."

Among the families there yesterday were Carol Evans, 54, of Lawnswood Road, Wordsley, and her grandson Kyle, aged six. Mrs Evans said Kyle was a bit frightened at first but then Titan made him laugh by making burping noises and he loved it.



Titan with, from left, shoppers Sheila Deane, Lara Horsley and Amy Humphries. Inset: Titan the Robot entertaining onlookers at the Merry Hill shopping centre

AN UNEMPLOYED mechanic who drove home when more than four times the drink-drive limit was followed home by an off-duty police officer who watched on as he took 20 minutes to find his front door keys.

Jason Pritchard had been drinking at The Cat pub in Wordsley before heading home in the early hours in his parents' car. But he almost collided with the officer as he left the car park, Dudley Magistrates Court heard.

The officer, followed 36-year-old Pritchard to his home in Barnett Lane, Kingswinford.

Pritchard, who was driving a Peugeot VRM, almost collided with a second vehicle coming in the opposite direction and was seen driving down the middle of the road in the incident at about 12.30pm, said Mr David Truelove, prosecuting.

When he reached his home, where he lives with his parents, he was "moving the car backwards and forwards" trying to reverse onto the drive.

Mr Truelove said: "The officer then watched the defendant and saw him spend a full 20 minutes – and she counted – trying to open the front door."

Banned

Pritchard was so drunk that he did not even require a roadside breath test, said Mr Truelove.

Pritchard, an unemployed mechanic who previously worked at Kwik Fit in Halesowen, had 146 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath when he was tested on April 4. The legal drink-drive limit is 35 microgrammes.

Pritchard, who admitted drink driving, was given a 12-month community order and must carry out 300 hours of unpaid work. He was also banned from driving for 30 months.

Chairman of magistrates, Mr Michael Penn, said: "A custodial sentence could have been imposed but, taking into account your previous record and your remorse, we will make a community order."

Mr Jahangeer Aslam, defending, said Pritchard could not remember being at the pub and had reacted badly to finding out his partner was having an affair.

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Hundreds of walkers set off for one of the routes on the 31st annual Dudley Trail which covered nine miles

Crowds hit the trail on 'perfect' day

A BUMPER crowd turned out in the holiday sunshine to enjoy the 31st annual Dudley Trail.

Organisers say 1,590 walkers stepped out to complete a number of routes measuring six, nine, 12, 18 and 26 miles as part of the Dudley Council event.

Attendances normally average around 1,300 but it is thought the bank holiday and good weather as well as people wanting to be a bit healthier helped boost numbers.

The trail is one of the Midlands' largest urban walking events. Those who took

part were able to explore routes including canal towpaths, disused railway lines, country footpaths and roads as part of the walks, which all started at Dudley Leisure Centre, at designated times between 8am and noon.

Perfect

Among the crowds was administrator Pat Lewis with her daughters Nikki Willetts, a customer service advisor and Melanie McGee who works in accounts.

The trio, from Gornal, tackled the nine-mile walk and said it was the fourth time

they had taken part in the event. Mrs McGee said: "The whole atmosphere of the day is great."

Members of the 1st Coombs Wood Explorers Scouts group took part in the 12 mile walk. Scout leader Jane Cocking said: "They all really enjoy taking part and we have done it for about six or seven years now."

Organiser Sally Newell said there had been about 300 people taking part in the 18 mile and 26 mile walk alone and added: "It is a cracking event. It was perfect walking weather."



Nikki Willetts, from Lower Gornal with her mother Pat Lewis and sister Melanie McGee from Upper Gornal



Scouts, from left, Adam Scarrott, Rob Hopkins, Jane Cocking, Kate Hopkins, Michael Scarrott, Sophie Homer, John and Paul Guy



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Hazel Ellett, from Halesowen, and her children Katherine and David Ellett



Melodie and Sadie Williams, from Cradley Heath

Families step out to boost hospital funds

Photos: Max Finnis

CHARITABLE Black Country families who have received life-saving help from Birmingham Children's Hospital took their place alongside 10,000 walkers in this year's BRMB Walkathon.

The 26, 13 or seven-mile walks around Birmingham, which took place on Sunday, was held to raise funds for the hospital's Emergency Department.

The final total has yet to be announced but staff from the hospital said they were hopeful of hitting their target of £500,000.

Andy Page, from Halesowen, was among those taking part with the aim of raising between £500 and £600.

His 12-year-old daughter Jasmine recently underwent a heart transplant; the first ever performed at Birmingham Children's Hospital, and is now recovering at home.

The IT consultant said: "I originally planned to do the 13-mile walk but my mate said 'don't be such a lightweight' so I agreed to do the whole thing."

"We're really grateful to everyone who's treated Jasmine and we've got so much to thank Birmingham Children's Hospital for."

Determined

Brave 11-year-old Jake Braggington, from Great Barr, completed the seven-mile family walk with his mum Sarah, a trainee teacher. Jake has survived life-threatening health problems including water on the brain (hydrocephalus), a brain tumour and a major seizure.

"I've raised £700," Jake, a Pheasey Park Primary School pupil, said during the walk. My mum raised £160 so I'm well up on her!"

His mother, Sarah, added: "Doing the Walkathon is quite a trek for Jake because he's only little but he's determined to do it to say a big thank you to Birmingham Children's Hospital for all the great treatment he's had there."

More than 50 Emergency Department staff completed the walk in customised sparkly hospital red vests, including staff nurses 23-year-Stephanie Sargeant and Gemma Powell, 28, from Walsall. "It's



Superman and Superwoman Rebecca Link and Dominic Allan, from Stourbridge

great to be part of an amazing, dedicated department like the emergency department but we're walking because we want to make it a better environment for the children," Stephanie said.

Twelve-year-old Connor Hadley, from Dudley, raised more than £1,000 with his mum Maggie.

The hospital recently saved the life of Connor's younger brother, two-year-old Tommy, who suffers with breathing difficulties.

Connor single-handedly helped his mum deliver Tommy after she suddenly went into labour at home, following instructions on the phone from emergency services.

"If it weren't for Birmingham Children's Hospital, Tommy would not be with us now," Maggie said.

"We feel really lucky and want to do all we can to support the hospital – so we're

Anglers get free alarms

Camels make home at zoo

BACTRIAN camels Charles and Jamindari are settling into their new home at Dudley Zoo.

It is the first time the zoo has had camels for more than a decade.

They are among many new arrivals, which include two female giraffes, Josie and Mia, who are part of an international breeding programme. Other animals showing their face for the first time are five-week-old Brazilian tapir Tallulah and six-month-old micro-pig Harvey.

Chief executive Peter Suddock said: "The female giraffes ventured out into the paddock for

the first time this week and the camels are settling in well in their newly-built enclosure near the farm.

"We haven't had camels on site for more than a decade and the enclosure has been designed and built in house by keeping staff, so it's been a busy time for everyone to get things ready for our main season."

Other projects include refurbishing one of the site's iconic Tecton structures to provide accommodation for Asiatic black bear, Inca, and four gelada baboons due to arrive at the end of May.

The team has also fitted alarms for people whose sheds have been raided in the past year.

Festival helps church bloom

A CHURCH in Lower Gornal will be in full bloom as it gets set to host its rare flower festival.

St James the Great, Church Street, which hosts the event every few years, will open its doors this Friday and Saturday May 14, from 10am until 4pm, and Sunday 15 from 1pm to 4pm.

The Twelve Apostles festival will run in conjunction with the church's summer concert, on Saturday May 14, where the Summerhill Choral Society will raise the roof from 7.30pm.

Churchwarden Helen on 01384 402343.

Beech said: "We are hoping to collect around £500 for the church."

"The choir do a lot of fundraisers in the local area and we are so pleased to have them on board to help us drum up even more support for the church and secure its future for generations to come."

Admission to the festival is £2 and £3.50 for the concert - refreshments will also be available.

All proceeds will go to help maintain the church.

Anybody interested in taking part or to make a donation contact Helen on 01384 402343.

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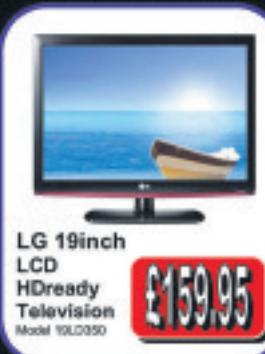
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School's new role process is rolling

A DUDLEY high school has been told by the Government that it can become an academy, giving it greater control over its finances.

Education Secretary Michael Gove has agreed in principle that Holly Hall Maths and Computing College can begin the conversion process to reopen as an academy at the start of the new school year in September.

Headteacher Graham Lloyd said a series of meetings were now being held with solicitors.

"There are a number of legal requirements we need to meet before we can open as an academy, including transferring staff and land contracts to the new academy name," he said.

Exciting

"We need to get everything signed off and get ourselves established as an academy before term finishes on July 27 to ensure we can reopen as planned in September."

"It's going to be a tough, very busy couple of months and there is a lot of work to do but it's a very exciting time."

Mr Lloyd said the decision to "go solo" would ensure the school had full control of its own budget.

"At the moment, we have a situation where a portion of our funding is allocated by Dudley Council – meaning if I disagree with what the decision is, I can't do anything about it," he said.

Bigger is better for bodybuilder



Naz competing in British Championships qualifier in 2006

WHILE most women go to the gym hoping to lose some weight for the summer, Naz Nureen is on a quest to be bigger. So, while other women may hit the treadmill, Naz regularly lifts weights of 22 kilos (48.5 lbs) in a bid to pump up her muscles.

At 17 years old she walked into Profitness gym in Halesowen and was stunned by the photos of women with muscles.

She never forgot how impressed she was with those photos and in 2001 she went back to the gym and started working towards her goal of being a female body builder.

In 2006 the single mother from Halesowen won first place in the English Federation of Body Builders UK qualifiers lightweight under 57kg (9 st) class. Then she achieved fourth place in the finals of the same competition the following year.

Naz, 32, says: "Before my first competition I was so nervous and didn't know how I was going to go out on stage in a bikini."

"However, for months I had been working so hard for those few minutes that I just walked on stage with my head held high."

Similar

Naz says eating a controlled diet is a vital part of the training process and she takes her meals and protein shakes everywhere with her. A typical day for Naz includes having breakfast of a protein shake, five boiled egg whites and a bowl of porridge, a morning snack of fruit and for lunch she has chicken, tuna and rice.

Mid-afternoon she has another protein shake and at 4pm has a similar meal to her lunch followed by another protein shake before her training and another shake afterwards at 6.30pm and then an evening meal of chicken and rice.

Naz, who is now studying to become a personal trainer, says her Muslim background has not conflicted with her hobby.

"I didn't feel I was going against my Asian

culture because this is just a hobby," says Naz, whose son Noman attends Windsor High School, Halesowen.

"I love lifting the weights, but it's the look that I like more than anything, and that's why I did it."

In preparation for competitions, Naz's regime becomes more extreme.

For the 12 weeks running up to the event, she slowly reduces the amount of food she eats, cutting down little by little, to reveal the muscles under her taut skin, and achieve the coveted competition look – and her training intensifies.

She even has to restrict her water intake.

Her trainer Mark Blundell, who owns Profitness, explains: "In 2007 Naz could have easily been British Champion but she didn't get her diet right."

Balance

"For around three months before the competition you have to shed the fat with a high protein, low carbohydrate diet and this becomes intensive in the last few weeks."

"Then a lot of body builders stop their water intake to try and dehydrate themselves to define their muscles even more."

Mark says it is a fine balance between being defined and ending up dehydrated in hospital.

"Body building is not as easy as people think and it does become a mixture of mental and physical effort," he says.

Naz suffered from a slipped disc in 2009 which put a hold on her training for a while.

"I had four weeks off and it was the worst month of my life because I knew I wasn't going to be able to train for a while," she says.

"I lost weight and tried to maintain my muscle by working just my upper body and so three months later I could start training again."

Naz says that since training as a body builder she has become more confident.

"I feel I can cope with anything, because I've taken control. It makes me feel powerful."



Feel the pain...
Naz doing chest press exercises with gym owner and coach Mark Blundell

Artist backs design moves

A STOURBRIDGE artist is backing a craft and design initiative.

Carol Griffin is supporting Craft and Design Month May 2011, which is designed to raise awareness of the creative talent in Britain.

She will be exhibiting and selling her enamel work at Broadfield House Glass Museum, Kingswinford, and the Red House Glass Cone Craft Fair on Saturday and Sunday (May 14 and 15).

Her contemporary work includes wall panels, jewellery and bowls.

She is also running enamel courses at Plowden & Thompson, Ablecote, to give people the opportunity to try something new, and create their own unique enamels.

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A taster workshop is on Saturday, May 21 (morning or afternoon) and a full day course on the following Thursday.

No experience is required and all materials is provided. More details on the website www.carolgriffinenamels.com

The craft and design month has been launched by Craft & Design magazine.

Editor Angie Boyer said: "The Crafts Council has reported that there are around 35,000 contemporary craftsman and women with a collective turnover of around £1 billion."



Pictured with a typical meal - she eats every three hours throughout the day.

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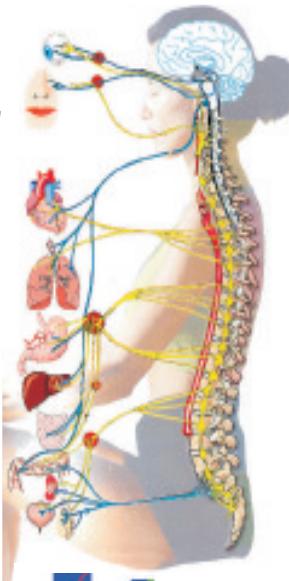
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Oxenton Croft, Halesowen



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Bell End, Rowley Regis



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Summer Road, Rowley Regis



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Two bedroom end terraced house, hallway, kitchen, lounge, first floor bathroom, front driveway and rear garden, double glazing and central heating.

Winchester Close, Rowley Regis



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Hope Street, Halesowen



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A two bedroom ground floor flat briefly comprising of a hallway, kitchen, bathroom, front and rear gardens, en- bloc garage.

Woolpack Close, Rowley Regis



£80,000

A two bedroom end terrace house with accommodation comprising lounge, kitchen, bathroom and rear garden. Double glazing and offering vacant possession.

Highfield Road, Rowley Regis



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Maple Road, Halesowen



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Brickhouse Road, Rowley Regis



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Winsford Close, Halesowen



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Three bedroom semi detached property, l-shaped lounge, study, breakfast kitchen, downstairs bathroom and first floor bathroom, gardens to the rear, side and front and timber garage.

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A modern two bedroom end of terraced house. Briefly comprising of a lounge, kitchen, bathroom and rear garden. The property benefits from central heating.

King Street, Halesowen



£110,000

This end terrace house has entrance lobby, downstairs wc, lounge, kitchen, utility room, three bedrooms, bathroom and rear garden. Double glazing.

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Harrold Road, Rowley Regis



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Sidaway Close, Rowley Regis



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Olive Hill Road, Halesowen



£150,000

A semi detached property comprising of lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, utility room, three bedrooms, family bathroom, rear garden, garage and off road parking.

Hawne Lane, Halesowen



£149,950

Three bedroom traditional semi detached house, hallway, lounge, dining room, kitchen, first floor bathroom and loft room, driveway and rear garden.

Burton Grove, Cradley Heath



£132,000

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Park Avenue, Rowley Regis



£129,950

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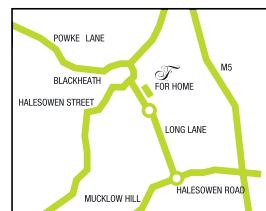
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Lakeland exclusives, above left, Slow Cooker and, right, Digital Toasters. See www.lakeland.co.uk

Let's get cooking

FORGET rushing a meal when you get home after a long day, arrive back to find a tasty casserole waiting for you – slowly does it with the Lakeland Slow Cooker.

You can prepare a stew and let it cook all day, so you can tuck right into a dish of tender meat, wholesome beans or flavoursome vegetables. The beauty of the slow cooker is that you can prepare the ingredients when you have the time and leave it bubbling for a convenient and healthy meal.

This Lakeland exclusive is a three and a half litre ceramic pot topped with a glass lid, so you can see what's

going on inside. The simple operating system has three settings – low for simmering and slow cooking, high for a faster cook and auto to keep food at serving temperature. It is available from Lakeland for £30.99 and the one and a half litre version is £20.99.

There are a lot more things than casseroles that can be created in a slow cooker. The Slow Cooker Cook Book (Lakeland, £9.99) by Catherine Atkinson offers more than 200 recipes, ranging from pot roasts to soups, steamed puddings and preserves. This handy hardback will help you get more out of your slow cooker.

Take the toil out of mashed pota-

toes with the Chef'n Potato Ricer (Lakeland, £29.99). All it takes is a squeeze on the non-slip handle and the ratchet system turns boiled spuds into creamy mash. Apparently it requires 65 per cent less effort than standard devices, simply smashing!

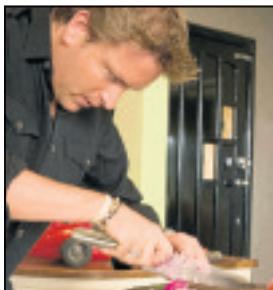
Make breakfast a breeze with the Lakeland Digital Toasters, get your level of toastiness just right with the digital display with countdown lights and quick pop up button. There are also defrost and reheat buttons plus extra-wide slots for crumpets and bagels. These chunky and metallic toasters look the business too. They come in two-slice (£30.99) and four-slice (£40.99) versions.

It will soon be salad season and if you've ever found yourself getting into a mushy mess with an avocado then you will appreciate a new flexible friend, the Flexicado (Lakeland, £4.79) which will scoop out perfect slices after the Mexican pear has been halved and stoned.

When it comes to slicing, celebrity cook James Martin has joined forces with Stellar for a new range of stylish knives with stainless steel anti-slip handles. The Saturday Morning Kitchen chef's 12-knife collection covers all culinary eventualities and includes four Japanese style Santoku knives, plus a carving fork and sharpening steel. Prices range from £7.15 to £15.50 with a five piece block for £62. For stockists see the website www.stellarknives.co.uk.



The Flexicado



Celebrity chef James Martin using one of his Stellar knives, above, Chef'n Potato Ricer



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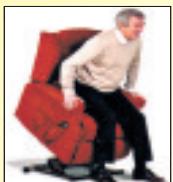
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Archives can now be seen on website

A HOST of fascinating photographs, articles and documents from Sandwell Council archives are now available to view online.

A total of 140,000 documents have been uploaded to the archive website and include school records and documents relating to major Black Country employers including Kenrick and Jefferson and Patent Shaft steel works. It also includes around 3,000 photographs which show a range of Black Country scenes.

Project

Borough archivist Sarah Chubb, who is based at Smethwick Library, on High Street said it has been a joint project between Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall and Sandwell councils to make their archives available on the internet.

Sandwell museums have also been cataloguing and uploading details and images of their artefacts onto the website.

She said: "It has taken us around 18 months to upload and catalogue all the documents and photographs.

Go to the website www.blackcountryhistory.org.



Sarah Chubb, from Sandwell archives, with one of the entries

'Bumper' wasp crop likely to be flying in

AN ARMY of wasps is set to descend on the Black Country and Staffordshire this summer with experts blaming the unseasonably warm springtime weather.

Pest controllers across the region said there is already a higher than normal number of wasps buzzing around and predict activity will be high following the Easter weekend.

They are warning a lack of springtime frost will lead to a 'bumper crop' of wasps come the

summer. Queen wasps have already started to make their nests ahead of schedule as the early spring sunshine creates the perfect conditions.

Increase

Calls to pest controllers and local authorities have already increased, with some claiming they have seen a 71 per cent increase on last year.

In Walsall, council chiefs have already had 28 inquiries about wasps so far this year, compared to just eight during the same

period in 2010. David Elrington, Walsall Council area manager for environmental health, said: "At this time of year, hibernating queen wasps are emerging to build their nests."

Wasp expert Paul Wilkinson, boss of Pestforce, said: "Last year, we were taking 11,000 calls across the country every day to wasp nests but with this lovely sunshine, we are expecting a bumper crop of insects later in the year.

"We reckon the number of calls could increase to around 17 or 18,000."

Singing to aid church

A CHURCH in Sedgley is holding a fundraising event on Saturday May 21 and 22.

The St Andrew's Church Choir and Singers will take part in the spring concert, Young at Heart.

The event will raise money for projects at St. Andrew's, which is in Bilston Street.

Both concerts will start at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £5 and can be booked on 01902 882197. Refreshments are provided.

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COMPETITION

Chance to get your paws on a top prize

If you are a dog lover this is your chance to collar a top prize. The Chronicle series has teamed up with PRO PLAN® to celebrate its roadshow coming to Sandwell Valley Park.

We are offering £150 worth of Pets at Home vouchers and PRO PLAN products for two winners, so they can thoroughly spoil their beloved pet.

The PRO PLAN Roadshow is due at Sandwell Valley Park on May 28 and 29 and is a destination for all dog lovers in the area. Not only will you be able to get a free health check for your dog with a qualified vet nurse, but you can also chat to a team of experts about health and nutrition advice as well as ask any questions you may have about your pet.

Samples

Plus, all dog owners can take advantage of a huge exclusive discount on PRO PLAN products - £5 for a 3kg bag (RRP £17.61)*. Visitors can also pick up vouchers and free samples (while stocks last) as well as find out about the 5 Point Promise money back guarantee from PRO PLAN.

PRO PLAN is available in veterinary surgeries and specialist pet retailers. Details can be found at www.proplan.co.uk and don't worry if you can't make it down to the roadshow, you can still take part in the 5 Point Promise challenge by visiting the website or picking up a leaflet in store.

In order to get your paws on £150 of Pets at Home vouchers and 2x14kg bags of PRO PLAN worth around £100 simply tell us how many promises PRO PLAN makes:

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- a)3
- b)5
- c)7



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To stand a chance of winning send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and contact number (only one entry per household) to PRO PLAN Competition, Chronicle series (editorial) 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: Thursday, May 19.

Usual rules apply.

Editor's decision is final

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the pulse

Olly proves he's his own man



Olly Murs – the real winner of X Factor 2009

JOE McElderry may have won The X Factor in 2009 but Olly Murs was the real winner.

The Essex lad used the TV singing show to kick start a career that has seen him notch up two hit singles, Please Don't Let Me Go and

Thinking Of Me, and a successful self-titled debut album that was only kept off the no1 spot by Take That.

Meanwhile, last month McElderry was dropped by Simon Cowell's record label Syco.

Murs – his family name is Latvian – was

dismissed by some as a Will Young or Robbie Williams clone.

But the boy from Braintree has carved a niche with a pop-reggae groove perfect for the recent sunny weather.

Former semi-pro footballer Olly, who also recently raised his profile partnering Chris

Moyles on his Radio 1 breakfast show, is in concert at Birmingham's NIA on Sunday.

Olly will be back in the region later this summer to place an outdoor concert with pop diva and The X Factor winner Alexandra Burke at Warwick Castle on July 15.

The pure sound of Secret Sisters

SONGS from the country music heydays of the 1940s and 50s are performed by The Secret Sisters, the stage name for Alabama siblings Laura and Lydia Rodgers, who won lots of British fans with their appearance on Jools Holland's Hootenanny last New Years Eve.

Following their support slot for Ray LaMontagne at the Symphony Hall, the sisters return to Birmingham for their own gig, at The Glee Club on Monday.

The Secret Sisters' debut single, a version of Johnny Cash's Big River, was produced by Jack White, of The White Stripes. Their well-received



The Secret Sisters whose songs harp back the heydays of country music

self-titled debut album, produced by the legendary T Bone Burnett, was released in February. Burnett said: "I have been making music for over 40 years and The Secret Sisters album is as close to pure as it gets."

Other forthcoming music gigs at the comedy club in The Arcadian Centre include: Tuesday, Elbow

support act Villagers, whose debut album Becoming A Jackal was Mercury Prize shortlisted; May 23, from Leonard Cohen's band The Webb Sisters; and on May 29, Andrea Corr launching her solo album Lifelines.

See www.glee.co.uk/birmingham or call 0871 472 0400.



TV listings start – page 25xx

YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE AND WEEK'S TV VIEWING



Theatre and show round-up – page 24



Reviews – page 29

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Tracie Bennett as Judy Garland

WORLD class ballet, opera and award-winning West End musicals have been announced in the new season at Birmingham Hippodrome.

The Queen and Ben Elton musical *We Will Rock You* returns to the Hurst Street theatre this summer.

Other highlights also include the return of Birmingham Royal Ballet's festive favourite *The Nutcracker*, hit comedy show *Calendar Girls* and, also by popular demand, the spectacular *Slava's Snow Show*.

Following its success at the Hippodrome in 2009, West End blockbuster *We Will Rock You* returns between July 5 and August 13 and will feature a star-studded cast which includes *Coronation Street*'s Ian Reddington, *Heartbeat* singer Noel Sullivan and former Birmingham Conservatoire

student The X Factor's Rhian Roberts.

A new production of *Evita* will take to the stage from September 12 to 24. The show is presented by Bill Kenwright by special arrangement with Andrew Lloyd Webber's Really Useful group and will feature Abigail Jaye as Eva Peron, Mark Powell as Che and Les Mis regular Earl Carpenter as Juan Peron.

Blizzard

Slava's Snow Show returns from November 9 to 13. Led by Russian clown Slava Polunin, the cast create a blizzard indoors as part of their spellbinding, surreal show.

Oliver Award-winning actress Tracie Bennett has taken the West End by storm as Judy Garland in Peter Quilter's *End of The Rainbow*, which charts the life of Garland, and comes to Birmingham between October 17 and 22.

In a nod to Billy Wilder's film

Some Like It Hot, *Some Like It Hip Hop* is a comical tale of love, mistaken identity, cross-dressing and gender stereotypes.

The cast includes Tommy Franzen, who starred in *So You Think You Can Dance*, Blaze and Goldberg and Teneish Bonner, who has appeared in *Into the Woods*, *Insease in the Brain* and *StreetDance 3D*. It runs between October 11 and 15.

The city's beloved Birmingham Royal Ballet will perform the gothic fairytale *Beauty and the Beast* between September 28 and October 2, *The Nutcracker* from November 25 to December 1.

Welsh National Opera make their regular visits to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Janacek's *Katya Kabanova* in November.

They are back in March with Verdi's *La Traviata*, *Beatrice & Benedict* by Berlioz, and Mozart's

The Marriage of Figaro. Eagerly-awaited highlights for next year include *Calendar Girls* from January 31 to February 4 and the stage version of hit film *Dirty Dancing*, which runs from July 4 to August 25, 2012.

Before that, panto star Brian Conley returns alongside everyone's favourite TV mum, Lynda Bellingham, in *Cinderella* over the festive season and into January.

Brund

Theatre chief executive Stuart Griffiths, said: "I am certain that this programme is as varied as any we have presented, with a wide array of brand new productions, stunning international companies and the launch of new seasons with new productions from both Birmingham Royal Ballet and Welsh National Opera."

To book call 0844 338 5000 or visit www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Racism and dating are some of the subjects that come under the spotlight in the musical *Avenue Q* with a cast of actors and puppets



Walking down a naughty Avenue

NAUGHTY New York musical Avenue Q, which some have described as an X-rated version of *The Muppet Show*, was a smash hit in London's West End and is coming to Birmingham with a run at the Hippodrome from Tuesday to Saturday, May 17 to 21.

Racism, pornography, sexuality and dating come under the spotlight for a cast that teams the actors up with colourful puppets in this no-holds-barred musical comedy by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx that takes a bite out of the Big Apple.

To Kill A Mockingbird, Harper Lee's classic

tale of a struggle against bigotry and racism in 1930s Alabama, is staged at Wolverhampton Grand from Tuesday to the following Saturday.

Christopher Sergel's stage adaptation sees familiar TV actor Duncan Preston swapping Emmerdale for the Deep South as campaigning lawyer Atticus Finch.

Meanwhile, West Bromwich Operatic Society's production of Lionel Bart musical Oliver continues until Saturday at the Grand.

Mind-bending illusionist and showman Derren Brown continues his residency with new show *SVengali* at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre to May 21.

Black Country Touring productions are back on the road. *Instant Wit*, a quick-fire comedy improvisation show, comes to George Salter School in West Bromwich this evening (Thursday, 6.30pm).

Laurie Lorry Theatre bring their comedy play *Sausage and Samosa*, about a lonely woman who takes a crash course in Asian culture in a bid to find love via an arranged marriage, to West Bromwich town centre venue The Public on Friday, May 20.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's new repertoire is now in full swing at their two theatres in Stratford-upon-Avon. Sara Crowe is

the haughty Lady Frugal in Dominic Hill's staging of 17th Century romp *The City Madam* at The Swan, which it shares with Gregory Doran's vision of 'lost' Shakespeare play *Cardenio*.

The latest Shakespeare blockbuster opens tomorrow (Friday) with Rupert Goold, the Enron director's version of *The Merchant of Venice* with Sir Patrick Stewart as Shylock.

It will be sharing the Royal Shakespeare Theatre with Michael Boyd's bloody Macbeth with Jonathan Slinger as the wicked, haunted tyrant. All four plays are in repertoire until October.

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Eurovision Song Contest 2011

BBC1, 8.00pm

Graham Norton commentates on the entertainment at the Esprit Arena in Dusseldorf, Germany, as reunited pop band Blue represent the UK in the final of the 56th edition of the competition. Though the group are optimistic their song I Can will bring the UK its first victory since Katrina and the Waves' 1997 triumph, many experts have tipped operatic tenor Amaury Vassili to scoop the prize for France with his epic ballad Sogno. The host nation has pinned its hopes on last year's winner Lena Meyer-Landrut.

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Great British Menu. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Olympic Dreams. An insight into the life of a road cyclist. **1.30** Cash in the Celebrity Attic. (R) **2.15** Bargain Hunt Famous Finds. (R) **3.00** Film: Father of the Bride. (1991) Comedy remake, starring Steve Martin. **4.40** Don't Scare the Hare. **5.15** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **5.30** So You Think You Can Dance Live. The remaining contestants perform.

6.30 Doctor Who. The Doctor meets an old friend.

7.20 So You Think You Can Dance. The dancers with the fewest votes perform again.

7.50 The National Lottery Saturday Night Draws. Presented by Jenni Falconer.

8.00 Eurovision Song Contest 2011. Graham Norton commentates on the entertainment at the Esprit Arena in Dusseldorf, Germany, as reunited pop band Blue represent the UK in the final of the annual music competition.

11.15 BBC News; Weather. National Lottery Update.

11.35 Match of the Day. Including highlights of Blackburn Rovers v Manchester United.

12.35 Film: Black Sheep. (2006) Comedy horror, with Nathan Meister, Peter Feeney and Danielle Mason; Weatherview. **2.00 BBC News.**

6.00 CBeebies. **7.00** CBBC. **12.00** Film: The Spanish Main. (1945) Swashbuckling adventure, starring Paul Henreid. **1.35 Film:** Battle Cry. (1955) Second World War drama, starring Van Heflin. **4.00** Two Greedy Italians. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R) **5.45** Dad's Army. (R)

6.15 The Comedy Genius of John Sullivan. A tribute to the comedy writer, who died last month. (R)

6.45 Citizen Smith. First episode of the late John Sullivan's 1970s comedy, starring Robert Lindsay. (R)

7.15 The Two Ronnies. Vintage comedy. (R)

8.00 Domestay. Historian Stephen Baxter explores his own theory about the purpose of the Domesday Book – an 11th-century record of land and property ownership in England. (R)

9.00 Have I Got a Bit More News for You. With guest hosts John Torode and Gregg Wallace. (R)

9.45 FILM: Blood Diamond. (2006) Premiere. A smuggler helps a fisherman find his missing son in war-torn Sierra Leone, in return for a rare diamond. Action thriller, with Leonardo DiCaprio.

12.00 Later with Jools Holland. (R) **1.05 Film:** The Hotel New Hampshire. (1984) Dark comic fantasy, starring Beau Bridges.

6.00 CITV: Mini CITV. **7.25 CITV.** **8.25 House Gift.** (R) **9.25 Coronation Street.** **11.45 This Morning:** Saturday. **12.45 ITV News;** Weather. **1.00 Live FA Cup Final.** Stoke City v Manchester City (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.30 Regional Programmes.** **5.45 ITV News;** Weather.

6.00 New Animals Do the Funniest Things. Comical clips and quirky stories from the animal kingdom, including burping sheep and a snowboarding dog.

7.00 Sing If You Can. Chesney Hawkes, Martin Bayfield and Tricia Penrose take on Craig Doyle, Roxanne Pallett and Leanne Jones, with Patsy Palmer as a panellist. Keith Lemon and Stacey Solomon host.

8.00 Britain's Got Talent. Ant and Dec host the latest round of auditions.

9.00 Piers Morgan's Life Stories: John Prescott. The former deputy prime minister discusses his career and personal life.

10.00 CITV: Britain's Got Talent. **10.15 FA Cup Final Highlights:** Stoke City v Manchester City.

11.15 FILM: The Enforcer. (1976) Crime thriller sequel, starring Clint Eastwood.

11.15 The Zone: ITV News Headlines. **3.15 Swindown.** (R) **4.05 ITV Nightscreen.** **5.30 ITV Morning News.**

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** That Paralympic Show. (R) **7.00 FIM Superbike World Championship.** (R) **7.25 British Formula Ford Championship.** **7.55 The Morning Line.** **8.55 T4:** Friends. (R) **9.25 T4: Koko Pop.** **10.00 T4:** The Saturdays: What Goes on Tour. **10.20 Glee.** **11.45 T4:** Friends. (R) **12.20 T4:** The Saturdays: What Goes on Tour. **12.40 T4:** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.15 That Paralympic Show.** **2.30 Channel 4 Racing.** **4.00 Come Dine with Me Down Under.** **4.30 Come Dine with Me Down Under.** **5.00 Come Dine with Me Down Under.** **5.30 Come Dine with Me Down Under.**

6.00 Come Dine with Me Down Under. **6.30 Channel 4 News.** **6.55 4thought.tv.**

7.00 The Restoration Man. Converting an old coach house in East Sussex. (R)

8.00 The Untold Battle of Britain. A squadron of Polish pilots who fought in the Battle of Britain. (R)

9.00 The Million Pound Drop. Live. Quiz show, presented by Davina McCall.

10.20 Stand Up for the Week.

11.10 FILM: Epic Movie. (2007) Fantasy spoof, starring Kal Penn.

12.50 Supersize vs Superskinny Kids. (R) **1.45 The Dead Zone.** (R) **2.25 The Astronomer's Sun.** (R) **2.35 Tomorrow.** (R) **2.40 Film: The Cooler.** (2003) Drama, starring William H Macy. **4.20 The Milkshake Show.** (R) **5.35 Thomas & Friends.** (R) **5.45 Roary the Racing Car.** (R)

6.00 Milkshake. **10.00 Animal Rescue Squad.** (R) **10.20 The Gadget Show.** (R) **11.20 Film: The Green Berets.** (1968) Vietnam War adventure, starring John Wayne. **2.05 Film: Mystery Woman: In the Shadows.** (2007) Crime mystery, starring Kellie Martin. **3.50 Film: Murder 101.** College Can Be Murder. (2007) Murder mystery sequel, starring Dick Van Dyke. (R) **5.30 Film: Major Dundee.** (1965) Western, starring Charlton Heston and Richard Harris.

7.55 5 News Weekend. **8.00 NCIS.** The team uncovers a case of identity theft. (R)

9.00 CSI: NY. Hawkes is persuaded by his girlfriend Camille to call in sick so he can join her at a food festival, but a stall explodes during the event – exposing his truancy to his colleagues.

10.00 CSI: Miami. A jet skier with a shady past is killed by a piece of slate that later proves to have come from Alex's own garden, raising suspicions that her son Bryan may be the killer. (R)

11.00 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. The team tackles four cases in one night. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **4.00 Rough Guide to Beaches.** (R) **4.10 Nick's Quest.** (R) **4.35 HouseBusters.** (R) **5.00 Hana's Helpline.** (R) **5.10 The Milkshake Show.** (R) **5.35 Thomas & Friends.** (R) **5.45 Roary the Racing Car.** (R)

ITV2
4.15 Film: Apollo 13 (1995) **7.00 Superhuman:** Genius **8.00 Homes from Hell** **9.00 Britain's Got More Talent** **10.00 Celebrity Juice** **10.45 Film:** Leaving Las Vegas (1995)

ITV3
1.55 Agatha Christie's Poirot **4.00 Lewis** **5.55 Inspector Morse** **8.00 Rosemary & Thyme** **9.00 Foyle's War** **11.00 A Touch of Frost**

ITV4
11.00 Live Indian Premier League Cricket. Royal Challengers Bangalore v Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians v Deccan Chargers. **8.00 Jean-Claude Van Damme: Behind Closed Doors** **9.00 Film:** The Day of the Jackal (1973) **11.55 Film:** Get Shorty (1995)

BBC THREE
7.00 Fearne & Reggie @ R1BW **7.20 Doctor Who Confidential** **8.00 Tinie Tempah & Black Eyed Peas @ R1BW** **9.00 Foo Fighters Live @ R1BW** **10.00 Russell Howard's Good News Extra** **10.45 Family Guy** **11.35 American Dad!**

BBC FOUR
7.00 Tiger – Spy in the Jungle **8.00 Julia Bradbury's Iceland Walk** **9.00 Film: Tell No One** (2006) **11.05 Julia Bradbury's Canal Walks** **11.35 Top of the Pops:** 1976

E4
3.40 Make It or Break It **4.40 Friends** **5.40 Glee** **7.00 The Big Bang Theory** **8.00 How I Met Your Mother** **9.00 Friends** **10.00 Film:** The Omen (2006)

FILM4
3.00 The Colditz Story (1954) **4.50 A Walk in the Clouds** (1995) **6.50 Young Sherlock Holmes** (1985) **Teen detective adventure,** starring Nicholas Rowe. **9.00 The Waterboy** (1998) **Comedy,** with Adam Sandler, Kathy Bates, Henry Winkler and Fairuza Balk. **10.45 Final Destination 2** (2003)

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Sunday TV

Choice



PERSPECTIVES: HUGH LAURIE DOWN BY THE RIVER

ITV1, 10.15pm

Documentary following the actor as he visits New Orleans on a journey to investigate the roots of jazz and blues, the genres that inspired his life-long passion for music. As well as exploring the city, Hugh also records his own versions of notable songs and performs with his band in Latrobes in the French Quarter, alongside stars including Allen Toussaint, Tom Jones and Irma Thomas.

6.00 Breakfast. 7.55 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 The Big Questions. 11.00 Country Tracks; Weather for the Week Ahead. 12.00 The Politics Show. 1.00 EastEnders. 2.55 Bargain Hunt. 3.20 Escape to the Country. (R) 4.20 Regional Programme. 4.50 Lifeline. 5.00 Points of View. 5.15 Songs of Praise. 5.50 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.10 Land Girls. (R) 7.00 Countryfile. Highlights from the programme's visits to Britain's islands.

8.00 FILM: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) A rogue captain and a blacksmith set sail to rescue a governor's daughter from feared supernatural pirates. Adventure, starring Johnny Depp.

10.10 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.35 Meet the Multiples. Documentary focusing on the experience of bringing up twins, triplets and quadruplets, which has become more common in Britain in the past 10 years.

11.35 FILM: The Night Listener. (2006) Mystery thriller, starring Robin Williams and Rory Culkin; Weatherview.

12.55 Sign Zone: The Apprentice. (R) 1.55 MasterChef. (R) 2.55 Holby City. (R) 3.55 Churches: How to Read Them. (R) 4.25 BBC News.

6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 10.00 Live Athletics. The Great Manchester Run. 12.00 World Olympic Dreams. Matthew Pinsent presents a look at preparations for the 2012 Olympic Games. 12.30 Live MotoGP. The French Grand Prix. (Start-time 1.00pm). 2.00 Live Swimming. The Great Salford Swim. 3.30 Live Athletics. The Great CityGames Manchester. 4.00 Film: McLintock! (1963) Comedy Western, starring John Wayne.

BBC2

6.00 CITV: Mini CITV. 7.25 CITV. 8.25 May the Best House Win. (R) 9.25 Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) 10.25 Sing If You Can. (R) 11.30 This Morning: Sunday. 12.30 Dinner Date. (R) 1.25 ITV News; Weather. 1.40 Film: Columbo: Dead Weight. (1971) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. 3.10 Britain's Got Talent. (R) 4.10 Film: The Spy Who Loved Me. (1977) James Bond spy adventure, starring Roger Moore, Barbara Bach and Richard Kiel.

7.10 Richard Hammond's Engineering Connections. The design secrets of Formula One cars.

8.00 Britain's Secret Seas.

The team visit a gannet colony in the Firth of Forth, Tooni Mahto investigates bottlenose dolphins and Paul Rose meets Navy divers clearing unexploded bombs from Cape Wrath.

9.00 Operation Crossbow.

The story of Second World War technicians who used 3D photographs taken by Spitfire pilots to map enemy territory, exposing Hitler's most dangerous secrets in the process.

10.00 Match of the Day 2.

Including highlights of Chelsea v Newcastle United.

11.20 The Shadow Line. (R)

12.20 Film: On a Clear Day. (2005) Drama, starring Peter Mullan. 1.55 BBC News. 4.00 The Super League Show. 4.30 Close.

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6.00 Sali Mali. (R) 6.05 The Hoobs. (R) 6.30 The Grid. 7.00 Freesports on 4. 7.25 T4: The Saturdays: What Goes on Tour. 7.45 T4: Hollyoaks. 10.15 T4: The Saturdays: What Goes on Tour. 10.35 T4: Being N-Dubz in America and Beyond. (R) 11.10 T4: The Saturdays: What Goes on Tour. 11.30 T4: Glee. (R) 12.50 T4: The Simpsons. (R) 1.25 T4: The Simpsons. (R) 1.55 Celebrity Coach Trip. (R) 2.25 Celebrity Coach Trip. (R) 2.55 Celebrity Coach Trip. (R) 3.30 Celebrity Coach Trip. (R) 4.00 Celebrity Coach Trip. (R) 4.30 Deal or No Deal: Banker's Birthday. 5.30 Time Team. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

6.45 4thtuev.

7.00 Come Dine with Me.

Four dinner-party hosts do battle in Exeter. 8.00 The Hotel. Wayne and his staff deal with stinging criticism from guests.

9.00 FILM: Die Hard 4.0.

(2007) Tough cop John McClane goes on the trail of a criminal mastermind plotting a technological terror attack on America. Action thriller sequel, with Bruce Willis and Timothy Olyphant.

11.30 FILM: The Business.

(2005) Comedy drama, starring Danny Dyer.

12.15 Premiership Rugby Union.

12.25 SuperCasino. 4.00 Rough Guide to Cities. (R) 4.10 Divine Designs. (R) 5.00 Hana's Helpline. (R) 5.10 The Milkshake! Show. (R) 5.35 Thomas & Friends. (R) 5.45 Roary the Racing Car. (R)

Channel 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. 6.05 Roary the Racing Car. (R) 6.15 Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) 6.25 Fireman Sam. (R) 6.35 Miss Spider's Sunny Patch Friends. (R) 6.50 The Beeps. (R) 7.00 Mio Mao. (R) 7.10 Chirro. 7.15 Harry and His Bucket Full of Dinosaurs. 7.25 Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) 7.30 Noddy in Toyland. (R) 7.45 Hana's Helpline. (R) 7.55 Milkshake! Music Box. (R) 8.00 Little Princess. (R) 8.15 The Adventures of Bottie Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) 8.25 Mist: Sheepdog Tales. (R) 8.45 Rupert Bear. (R) 9.00 Olivia. (R) 9.15 The M Man Show. (R) 9.30 Gerald McBoing Boing. (R) 10.00 Family Food Fight. (R) 10.30 OK! TV Sunday. 11.30 The Hotel Inspector. (R) 12.30 Extreme Fishing with Robson Green: At the Ends of the Earth. (R) 1.30 Ice Road Truckers. (R) 2.35 Film: Gunsmoke. (1953) 4.10 5 News Weekend. 4.20 Film: Are We Done Yet? (2007)

6.05 FILM: Zathura: A Space Adventure. (2005)

Family sci-fi adventure, starring Josh Hutcherson.

8.10 FILM: Practical Magic. (1998) Fantasy, starring Sandra Bullock.

10.00 The Walking Dead.

11.05 FILM: House on Haunted Hill. (1949) Horror remake, starring Geoffrey Rush.

12.50 SuperCasino. 4.00 Rough

Guide to Cities. (R) 4.10 Divine

Designs. (R) 5.00 Hana's

Helpline. (R) 5.10 The Milkshake!

Show. (R) 5.35 Thomas &

Friends. (R) 5.45 Roary the

Racing Car. (R)

Digital

ITV2
3.15 Film: Apollo 13 (1995) 6.00 Britain's Got Talent 7.00 Animals Do the Funniest Things 8.00 Kerry Katona 9.00 Peter Andre: The Next Chapter 10.00 Film: Waterworld (1995)

ITV3
2.00 Inspector Morse 4.05 Film: Summer Holiday (1963) 6.15 Mr Bean 6.50 Agatha Christie's Poirot 8.00 Film: Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (1971) 10.00 Barbara Windsor Uncut 11.40 Film: Lorenzo's Oil (1992)

ITV4
1.00 Live Indian Premier League Cricket. Kings XI Punjab v Delhi Daredevils and Kochi Tuskers Kerala v Rajasthan Royals. 8.00 Premieres: Rugby Union 9.00 Jean-Claude Van Damme: Behind Closed Doors 10.00 Live Cycling. The Tour of California.

BBC THREE
7.00 Doctor Who 745 Doctor Who Confidential 8.00 Lady Gaga: The Build Up @ R1B8 9.00 Lady Gaga Live @ R1B8 10.00 Family Guy 10.45 American Dad! 11.30 Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps

BBC FOUR
7.00 A History of Christianity 8.00 The Secret Life of the National Grid 9.00 Shanties and Sea Songs with Gareth Malone 10.00 The History of Safari with Richard E Grant 11.30 Bee Gees: In Our Own Time

E4
3.05 Make It or Break It 4.10 Film: Black Knight (2001) 6.00 Friends 7.00 90210 7.55 Friends 9.00 Desperate Housewives 11.00 Being Erica 11.55 The Big Bang Theory

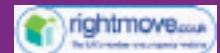
FILM4
2.45 The Thirty-Nine Steps (1959) 4.35 Planet of the Apes (1968) 6.50 Night at the Museum (2006) 9.00 Don't Say a Word (2001) 11.10 Scary Movie (2000)



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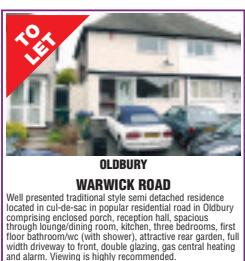
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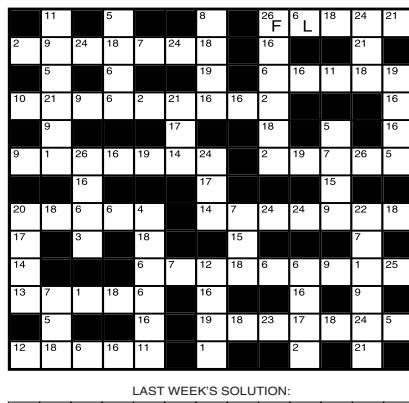
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Brain Gym

No.116

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



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Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

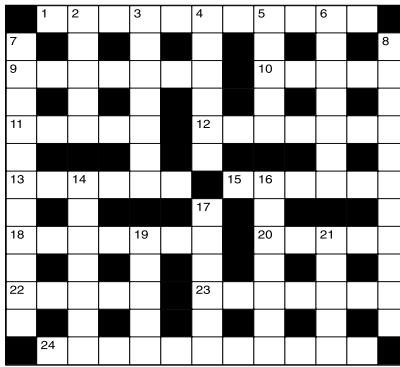
- Take what is suitable? (11)
- Disentangle one French composer (7)
- Lawless law (5)
- It is in fact a long claw (5)
- Shoots something to eat (7)
- I've now become available for inspection (2,4)
- Hostilities cut capital (6)
- Sing in French first to delight (7)
- After getting bail somehow, I find an excuse (5)
- It often does in periods of depression (5)
- He tells you whose turn is next (7)
- Sports clubs dances hard hit by rackets perhaps (6,5)
- Inject a cubic-centimetre into a climbing plant as a safeguard (7)
- It may make people turn pale (7)
- Old punishments may still provide interest (6)
- Crime of one who satisfied a burning desire? (5)
- I have timber that's perfect (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

- Stage make-up (6-5)
- Set apart (7)
- Hurl (5)
- Doomed (5)
- Refuse (7)
- Mourn (6)
- Dormant (6)
- Public transport (7)
- A fish (5)
- Additional (5)
- Unyielding (7)
- Shakespeare play (2,3,4,2)
- Perch (5)
- Desert (7)
- Vigour (6)
- Change (5)
- Relate (7)
- Paris landmark (6,5)
- Yam (5,6)
- Summary of business (7)
- A reverse (3-4)
- Attack (6)
- A spree (5)
- Giraffe-like animal (5)

Down



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Malingering; 5 Asia; 9 Emit; 10 Athletic; 11 Snarl; 12 Rankles; 13 Press fastener; 18 Sporting; 19 Peep; 20 Epicure; 21 Awash; 22 Site; 23 Stirrups. Down: 2 Almoner; 3 Interns; 4 Entertainment; 6 Set plan 7 Accuser; 8 Planet; 13 Possess; 14 Egotist; 15 Set out; 16 Embrace; 17 Evens up. QUICK - Across: 1 Actuary; 5 Epic; 6 Emissary; 7 Emissary; 8 Emissary; 10 Emissary; 12 Emissary; 18 Dramatic; 19 Tube; 20 Edifice; 21 Snare; 22 Sage; 23 Assemble. Down: 2 Closure; 3 Upright; 4 Leisureliness; 6 Partial; 7 Cleanly; 8 Lancelet; 13 Sadness; 14 Nearing; 15 Italic; 16 Antonym; 17 Liberal.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

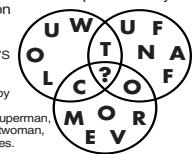
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3
2	3	1	4	5	6	7	8	9
7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4
3	4	1	2	5	6	7	8	9
6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

2	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3
6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5
3	4	1	2	5	6	7	8	9
5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	4	1	2	5	6	7	8	9
5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4

Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
 The letter represented by the question mark is M. Superman, Batman, Batwoman, all superheroes.



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the pulse

CD reviews

Small Talk - Twenty Twenty (Geffen)

A throw back to the days of Busted and McFly (when they still had puppy fat). This is boys with guitars power pop, lots of won-oh choruses and riffs they may have borrowed off an old Cheap Trick album. These East Anglian lads have been to Wolverhampton a couple of times recently (supporting The Saturdays and The Wanted) and judging by their reception at the latter gig, their time may have come. Love's A Freak sounds like a certain hit.

Mirrorwriting - Jamie Woon (Arista)

Woozy R&B with spacey dubstep tendencies from a singer-songwriter from London. Akin that other dubstepper turned singer-songwriter James Blake but Woon's songs are less minimalist. Songs like Night Air, Lady Luck and Middi having a strong pop appeal enhanced by the atmospheric electronics. Woon will be in concert at Birmingham HMV Institute on June 6.

Outside Looking In - Delta Maid (Geffen)

Hailing from Merseyside but sounding more Mississippi, Delta Maid has a voice as crystal clear as a mountain spring and writes perfectly decent bluesy country songs. Vocally she recalls the likes of Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette, which is pretty good company, but has a modern approach to her songs that has seen her support the likes of Seth Lakeman and Ray LaMontagne. This is a solid and likeable debut album.

Cat's Eyes (Polydor)

Canadian singer Rachel Zeffira and Faris Badwan, lead singer of British rockers The Horrors, bonded over a shared love of 1960s girl groups, such as The Shangri-Las, and the result is this highly atmospheric semi-homage to the echoey, whispered, big beat sounds of the 60s. They come across as a kind of Goth Sonny and Cher with nods to Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazlewood, Marianne Faithful, Nick



Power pop boys Twenty Twenty – their time may have come

Cave, Goldfrapp, Saint Etienne and Phil Spector's entire output. I imagine they would have a permanent residency in the town of Twin Peaks.

Destroyed - Moby (EMI)

Globetrotting synth master Moby apparently wrote these songs on his laptop in hotel bedrooms during bouts of insomnia caused by time zone body clock confusion, and finished them off in his Manhattan studio. The results are synthetic symphonies with surging melodies, a perfect soundtrack for the kind of deserted sodium-lit cityscapes that the bleary-eyed Moby must have seen from his window at 3am. Moby sings on a couple of tracks, guest female vocalists on others and some are pure instrumentals. In atmosphere and style Destroyed also owes something to Kraftwerk's classic Neon Lights and Bowie's Low album. The finest moment is the track Stella Maris with its cathedral air of heavenly floating vocals.

Vices & Virtues - Panic! at the Disco (Fuelledbyramen)

The American rockers overcome a radical line-up revamp to bounce back with a confident and rather likeable brash

pop-rock album, somewhat akin to their fellow Las Vegas The Killers. Stand out tracks include The Ballad of Mona Lisa, Hurricane and the distinctly A-ha-like Memories.

Free - Twin Atlantic (Red Bull)

Howling guitars from a hard-riffing Glaswegian outfit with a definite Celtic feel to their Tartan Foo Fighters-like attack, crafted by ace producer Gil Norton. This, their first full album, could be the start of something big.

Toy Horses (Albinia)

A step-dad/step-son duo from Wales who used MySpace to gain attention for their songs, picking up radio airplay and being flown over to America to record this debut album with ex-Wilco member Ken Croomer, who was won over by the songs on their MySpace page. Toy Horses are 21-year-old Adam D Franklin and his step-father 40-year-old Tom Williams. When they play together there is no sign of a generation gap and they do have a knack for a catchy song with Ray Davies feel to their folk-flavoured semi-acoustic pop numbers.

A Little Brighter - Pete Lawrie (Island)

A young Welshman from Liverpool, Lawrie has a pleasantly husky voice and a clutch of good songs that reveal his influences – Paul Simon, Bruce Springsteen, Elbow – whilst remaining original. A Little Brighter is just missing that stand-out song to propel him into the forefront but Half As Good and the hazy Paper Thin come close.

The Sound of Sunshine - Michael Franti and Spearhead (Capitol)

As you might expect, given the title, these are summery sounds, reggae hybrids with pop and hip hop and even, on probable hit I'll Be Waiting, stadium rock in a U2 mode.

Leon Burakowski

Good use of the sets with remarkable and colourful costumes combined to tell this Dickens'

Leon Burakowski



Hard-riffing Twin Atlantic – their first album could be the start of something big

Games reviews

Operation Flashpoint: Red River (15, Codemasters)

THE "War on Terror" moves to Tajikistan, between Afghanistan and China, in this hardcore US military first person shooter from Codemasters.

You play Kirby, leader of a four man contingent of US Marines. Your boots are dropped on the ground and then you have to use your wits in a guerilla war with insurgents. But things really hot up when the Chinese Army get involved.

This isn't for casual thrill-seekers. Missions are long and multi-stage with enemies often engaged at a distance (keep that sniper rifle handy). The pace is slow a build-up with sudden bursts of action, which maybe more real warfare.

The controls take a while to become familiar and as the leader you must remember to keep in close contact with your men.

But it is much more satisfying to lead a successful team mission than running around firing at everything that moves. Online it's even more of a challenge, surprisingly cerebral for a shooter... this one is for wanna-be officers rather than gun-ho grunts.

The graphics are stunning. Tajikistan is realised in dusty mountainous glory.

Sometimes you will find your-



Section 8 Prejudice is a good looking action romp

self squinting into the low sun.

I do hope Codemasters will keep the franchise pure with no silly zombie modes because with this sim you can almost taste the

Tajikistan dust.

The certificate is probably not so much for the violence than for the expletive-studded soldier banter.

If there was an award for

imaginative cussing, this would be a certain winner.

Operation Flashpoint: Red River was reviewed on Xbox 360 and is also available for PS3 and PC.

Section 8 Prejudice

(16, TimeGate)

Available to download from XBLA for 1200 points (around a tenner), this is the sequel to the Texan developers' 2009 Section

8 sci-fi shooter that was rather unfairly dismissed by many as a Halo clone.

This is a good looking action romp with you playing a hi-tech super soldier in an Iron Man-like armoured body suit, sky diving onto alien planets to take on those who threaten Earth's colonies.

Equipped with a jetpack and an array of weaponry plus the ability to lock-on to targets, Prejudice is a blaster's paradise.

The campaign mode with its various missions as the story unfolds can see gamers happily while away the hours.

It's instant success on Live Arcade suggests gamers reckon Prejudice is a pretty good bargain.

Leon Burakowski

Review

Oliver! Grand Theatre

THE West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS) can be rightly proud of their production of Lionel Bart's classic musical Oliver! The work they put into this show was obvious right from the start.

The enthusiasm of the massive cast was infectious and the young dancers who did the opening of Food Glorious Food set the pace for all the dance routines, which were executed splendidly.

Ben Evans is wonderfully innocent and sweet as Oliver and has a voice which belies his small stature. The voices of all the main characters were refreshingly strong and certainly worthy of special mention is Sarah Moors who played the luckless Nancy.

Good use of the sets with remarkable and colourful costumes combined to tell this Dickens'

tale of rags to riches where young Oliver falls on misfortune, is caught up with a gang of London criminals, lead by the old rogue Fagin played by Jerry Gormley.

He struggled through most of his performances to suppress his Midlands accent, but this did not detract from his stage antics and renditions of the favourites You've Got To Pick A Pocket and Reviewing The Situation.

Throughout the production, the flamboyant cast brought real gusto to well-known songs such as Consider Yourself, Oom Pah Pah and Who Will Buy and made this a spectacle well worth watching.

Oliver! Runs until Saturday May 14.

Danny Farragher

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The MG6 was the first car produced at the re-opened Longbridge factory

A NEW MG car has rolled off the production line at the company's Longbridge plant, signalling a new era of manufacturing for the brand.

This comes six years after thousands of jobs were shed when the West Midlands factory closed.

Some of the factory's 400 workers gathered to watch the car as it emerged from production amid clouds of dry ice and bursts of confetti.

MG is now owned by Chinese car company SAIC and is describing the new vehicle as the first all-new MG for 16 years.

The first car off the line was a red MG6 and was

driven by the plant's only female factory worker, Lisa Ponter.

Ponter, who was one of those who lost her job, said she did not hesitate to return when production at the site resumed.

Compete

"It is great to see cars coming off the line again. It's been too long and hopefully more people will be employed here," she said.

The 1.8-litre MG6 will compete with small vehicles such as the Volkswagen Golf and Ford Focus.

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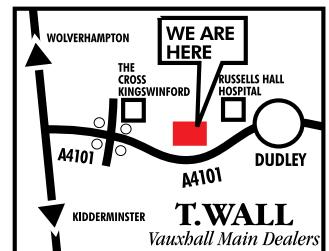
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COACHMAN MIRAGE LUX
4-berth, 17ft, 1990. Immaculate condition, end washroom, separate shower cubicle, full oven and fridge, hot and cold water, blow heating, full awning plus extras, ready to go, reason for sale. £4,950 ono. 07917 776137.



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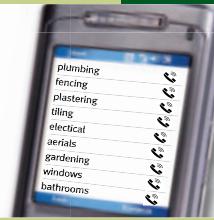
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SPORT

thechronicle

Fletcher brace sparks belief as the Molineux fans go wild

WELL, Wolves might not be safe. But it feels like it.

It doesn't get much better than yesterday's win over your local rivals in terms of preparation for the last two games.

An ultimately comprehensive victory to end a miserable five-match winless streak not only put Mick McCarthy's side out of the drop zone for the first time since February 26.

But it gave players and fans genuine hope that they can avoid relegation for the first time since that win over Villa on March 19.

Captain Karl Henry believes they need at least another win to be safe.

And at the very least, they have put themselves in the best frame of mind to do as they prepare to go up against an injury-ravaged Sunderland side this Saturday. Knowing Wolves as we do, their fate probably won't be known until the last day against Blackburn.

Glorious

But for the moment, they have given their supporters another glorious occasion to remember that, given the opposition, must rank right up there with victories against Chelsea, Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool and Villa.

Once again they proved that they are at their best when they are in the opposition's faces. As results have proved, what they cannot do is sustain the form of these high-octane performances on a regular basis. That's why they are where they are.

But it's a joy to anyone connected to Wolves when it comes off. Of course, triggers are needed for this type of in-your-face display, and no-one typified this gutsy performance more than Stephen Hunt.

This was always going to be the sort of game where you felt the fiery winger would excel. And so it proved as he led his team-mates by running non-stop, flying



Three: Fletcher celebrates his second



Baggies hitman Peter Odemwingie prompts late anxiety in the home fans by scoring from the spot

into tackles and closing down to force errors to set the tone for others to follow.

That Matt Jarvis wasn't missed says a lot about Hunt's performance.

Alongside him was a revitalised Jamie O'Hara, who looked back to his best, while Wolves' front two built on their impressive collective performance at Birmingham last week by never allowing Jonas Olson or Abdoulaye Meite a moment's peace.

Wolves practise set-pieces a lot in training and their work was well founded with Albion going into the game having conceded 25 from corners and free-kicks as Hunt's corners created the first two goals.

Wolves	3	1	Albion
3	1	1	Albion

Steven Fletcher and Adlene Guedioura applied the close-range finishes after finding themselves unmarked three yards out in the 17th and 28th minutes.

That not only punished Albion for a sluggish start, but gave McCarthy's side a platform from which they rarely looked like relinquishing.

Of course, it wouldn't be Wolves without a wobble, but thankfully for gold and black hearts and minds it duly came

after their side were 3-0 up thanks to last man Foley to rattle the bar to leave Wolves rattled. And you could sense the tension teeming down from the stands was only then that Albion started to play, and they gave Wolves more than a few nervous moments triggered by Peter Odemwingie's 54th minute penalty awarded for Guedioura's trip on Jerome Thomas.

That sparked a series of attacks which saw Wayne Hennessey, who had earlier got a fingertip to Odemwingie's first-half injury-time shot, claw away Simon Cox's volley on the hour.

Four minutes later, Thomas escaped

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LEISURE LEAGUES is looking for more teams to join its summer competition at Brierley Hill.

The Brierley Hill league, which runs at Thames Leisure Centre, is the ideal way keep in shape during pre-season.

Senior manager Chris Rowntree said: "As much as the summer is a great time of the year, it just doesn't feel right without football on tap."

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Details on 0845 230 2340, or at www.leisure-leagues.net

Club out to beat 230 total

KEWFORD Eagles stage their annual five-a-side tournament on July 9-10 at Dudley Kingswinford Rugby Club in Wall Heath hoping to break last year's tally of more than 230 team entries.

Boys' competition range from under-eights to under-16s and girls from under-nines to under-17/18s.

Facilities include private car parking, a club bar and side events.

For further details visit www.kewfordes-gles.co.uk or contact 07968 928818.

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sport

A sweet smell of success for Musk

Stourbridge (24pts) 276-5, Romsey and Huntingdon (2 pts) 106. Stourbridge won by 170 runs.

JAMES MUSK starred with bat and ball to set Stourbridge up for a huge victory over Romsey and Huntingdon.

The all-rounder bludgeoned 93 from 53 balls before claiming the wickets of Romsey's top four batsmen as Stourbridge moved to the top of Worcester Crusader League Division One.

After being asked to bat Stour made the best of the conditions on offer, with threat of rain ever present.

An opening stand of 54 between Alex Bingham (34) and Steve Game (21) provided the platform for the strokemakers down the order to increase their side's run rate, writes Harshal Patel.

Josh Banks stroked his way to 59 off 85 balls and, helped by Audi Alexander (30), put on 53 runs.

The real impetus came from Musk. His onslaught contained three huge sixes over the bowler's head and he carried on the good work after Banks was dismissed with the score on 212.

With a 276-5 total at his back Stour skipper Richard Bradley set an attacking field with a cordon of slip fielders and a gully. It was Musk who provided the breakthrough, having opener Alie Williams caught at gully for 34.

When Romsey captain Robert Hamblett fell at 24 to a slip catch off Musk, the visitors began to slip away.

The rain came too late to save Romsey from a comprehensive defeat, with Musk taking 4-22 and David Jones cleaning up the tail with 4-46.

Bromsgrove (15pts) 188-9, Stourbridge (5pts) 126-5, Draw.

The second and fourth XI's both saw their games fall victim to the rain but the third's match at Bromsgrove survived.

Stourbridge put the home team in and made a good start with accurate spells from Ben Green and Kalpesh Patel.

Dave Colesby took 4-73 including two caught and bowled while Matt Jeavons chipped in with 2-25. But Ian Walker's unbeaten 79 took the home team to 199-9.

Torrential rain with five overs left saw Stour one run short of a losing draw.

DROPPED CATCH BUT OLD HILL WIN

Coventry & North Warwickshire (2pts) 156-8, Old Hill (20pts) 162-3. Old Hill won by seven wickets

A DROPPED catch failed to prevent Old Hill taking a good victory at Binley Road.

They won the toss and inserted the home team, swiftly making inroads to reduce them to 52-4.

But a dropped slip catch helped produce a stand of 49 before Matt Pickering (40) was removed by Nathan Round, writes Derek Grifffiths.

Coventry & NW reached just 156-8 from their 47 overs with Zafran Ali (5-35) the pick of the Old Hill bowlers. In reply Old Hill got off to a good start and Nitish Patel (26), Round (35 not out) and Dan Wood (38 not out) eased them to the target.

Round and Wood put on an unbeaten 68 to secure the points.

Moseley (15pts) 186-5, Old Hill (5pts) 124-7, Draw

Players and officials wearing black armbands lined up for a minute's silence before the second team match in memory of playing colleague Neil Petridge.

Rain delayed the start but Old Hill began well after winning the toss.

After 10 of the 30 overs they had Moseley poised precariously at 34-3.

Regular

But Juddip Nandra (81) then shared partnerships of 69 with Kish Patel (41) and 73 with Nadi (41) to take the visitors to a daunting total of 186-5.

The home side lost wickets at regular intervals with only Joe Thorn (72) managing to stand firm against hostile bowling.

But Old Hill held out for the draw.

The third's game with Halesowen was postponed due to bad weather.

Halesowen (24pts) 177, Old Hill (5pts) 67, Halesowen won by 110 runs

An experienced Halesowen side battled first on a difficult wicket and amassed 177 all out from 42.1 overs.

Mohammed Ramzan (47) top scored but Old Hill gifted the visitors 37 runs in extras.

Old Hill's fourths were no match for Halesowen and only two of their players reached double figures.

Head coach Stew Nicklin said: "This has been an incredible weekend."

They crashed to 67 all out in 23.4 overs and suffered a heavy defeat by 110 runs.



Jamie Harris in the field against Shrewsbury.

Picture: James Marsh

Piece of history for Jamie, 14

JAMIE HARRIS made history for Himley in their winning draw against champions Shrewsbury.

The 14-year-old became the youngest player to play Birmingham League Premier Division first team cricket for the club.

Harris, who opens the batting for Worcestershire

Under-15s and is a member of the Worcestershire satellite academy, was restricted to fielding duties in a rain-hit game.

Chris Tranter (72) and Ben Smith (63) took Himley to 207-6 and Shrewsbury had reached 171-8, at the premature

close with six overs left, with skipper Ed Foster hitting 88.

Kidderminster Victoria opened with a six-wicket loss to Knowle & Dorrige.

Kidderminster captain Jonathan Wright topscored with 52 in their total of 158-8 in 40 overs. Luke Parker (49) and Chishti

Fordhouses finished three runs short of victory with three wickets left at Halesowen in Division Two. Mohammed Shaib (84) and Hasan Quami (55) took Halesowen to 197-8 (Jatin Kohli 4-70) before Fordhouses gave a side two divisions higher than them last year a fright.

Young Glassboys' treble triumph



The victorious side, back from left, physio Derek Cronin, administration manager Keith Grainger, Myles Nettleford, Ryan Passey, Stephen Ashman, captain Matt Preston, Will Worthington, Alex Welch, Jakey Downing, Richard Smith, Dominic Richards, assistant manager Gary Brown, manager Dave King and coach John Hayes. Front from left, goalkeeping coach Steve Meeson, Declan Kirby, Ryan Moore, Bradley Evans, Craig Tibbets, Sam Pritchard, Alex Welch and Callum Billington.

Four out of four for the Halas finalists

HALAS HAWKS had four more and Sophie Pritchard only to see Gornal equalise and force extra time.

It was Danielle Dudson who made the vital breakthrough, scoring her first ever goal for Halas. A second goal for Amy Blakemore made the game safe.

Halas 2 Withymoor 1

A cracking under-16 girls final saw Halas fight back to win from a goal down.

They trailed in the first half but two goals by Jess Morton gave Halas the win.

Brierley Hill Bullets 0 Halas Hawks 7

The under-16 boys made a dream start when Guy Millward scored from a Chris Swanwick corner.

But Brierley Hill were unlucky to go in two down at the break following Alex Chappell's goal.

Bolys 0 Brierley Hill 4 Gornal 2

The under-13s led promotion contenders Brierley Hill 2-0 at the break with a brace from Michael Eaton. The home side fought back to lead 3-2 before Eaton completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot. But the Bullets had the last word.

Girls League Halas Hawks 10 Santiago Colts 0

Halas re-discovered their eye for goal in this under-12s league game as Lucy Heaslegrave grabbed seven, Sophie Heaslegrave two and Bethan Bryan the other.

Droitwich Spa 1 Halas H 1

The under-15s continued their unbeaten run with a draw against a talented Droitwich side.

Chloe Biddestone flicked the ball over the keeper for the Halas goal.

Bolys 0 Brierley Hill 4 Halas Hawks 5 West Haggley S 1

Goals from Cameron Milne (2), Dylan Keeling (2) and Matt Jones saw the under-12s West retain their place in division one.

Brierley Hill Bullets 4 Halas Hawks 3

The under-13s led promotion contenders Brierley Hill 2-0 at the break with a brace from Michael Eaton. The home side fought back to lead 3-2 before Eaton completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot. But the Bullets had the last word.

Final day party at Tividale falls flat

Tividale 0 Bewdley 3

CHAMPIONS Tividale had their end of season party spoiled as they missed the chance to end the West Midlands Premier League campaign on 100 points.

It was designated fancy dress day at The Beeches but Bewdley were in the mood to play party-poopers.

After an even opening quarter during which neither side threatened, Bewdley took the lead on 28 minutes with a well-taken Chris Seekings goal.

Tividale responded positively but without being able to penetrate the visitors' defence.

The second half began with immediate pressure from Tividale but they were rocked when Bewdley added a second after 48 minutes, Ollie Smith scoring from close range after a goalmouth scramble.

His goal brought a lot of huffing and puffing from the hosts but in truth they rarely threatened to get the ball past Bewdley's veteran keeper Darren Steadman.

Seekings netted his second goal and Bewdley's third on 70 minutes against a tired-looking Tividale side who have the League Cup final against Wolverhampton Casuals on tonight (May 12).

Bustleholme 3 AFC Wulfrunians 2

Bustleholme capped a fine West Midlands Premier season with a tremendous comeback victory thanks to a Matt Jukes hat-trick.

Mark Swann and Ade Bandele put the visitors in control but Jukes pulled one back.

Jukes then scored a superb solo goal and netted the winner five minutes from time.

Saxons beaten

A STOURBRIDGE Saxons side depleted by injuries ended their season with a 50-17 loss at Launceston.

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